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141310Z Nov 02

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 005543

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FOR WHA/CCA AND EB/ESC/ESP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2007

TAGS: PREL ETRD PHUM CU ETRD PHUM CU IT UNGA ITPREL UNGA HUMAN RIGHTS

SUBJECT: CUBA/UNGA: ITALIAN RESPONSE TO DEMARCHE ON

ANTI-EMBARGO RESOLUTION

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REF: A. SECSTATE 223006

1B. ROME 5355

CLASSIFIED BY: POLMINCOUNS T. COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

11. (U) THIS IS AN ACTION MESSAGE. PLEASE SEE PARA 5.

12. (C) SUMMARY: IN RESPONSE TO A DEMARCHE ON THE CUBAN ANTI-EMBARGO RESOLUTION, MFA COUNSELOR GORETTI STATED THAT THE GOI WOULD VOTE THE AGREED EU POSITION. HE DISAGREED WITH U.S. POINTS ON THE SCOPE OF THE EMBARGO, ITS IMPLEMENTATION, AND THE EFFECT OF THE RESOLUTION BUT WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE EU EO V WOULD EMPHASIZE HUMAN RIGHTS. GORETTI SHARED A READOUT ON THE NOV. 4 EU-CUBA TALKS, WHICH HAD GONE AS HE HAD EXPECTED--BADLY. THE EU HAD RAISED A NUMBER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREE MARKET CONCERNS, AND THE GOC'S RESPONSES RANGED FROM "99.9% OF CUBANS LIKE THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE," TO "WHY DON'T YOU GO PICK ON SOMEBODY ELSE?" TO CLAIMING THAT U.S. POLICY TOWARD CUBA AND CUBAN AMERICANS WAS TANTAMOUNT TO TERRORISM. END SUMMARY.

13. (C) POLOFF DELIVERED REF A DEMARCHE REQUESTING NON-SUPPORT OF THE CUBAN ANTI-EMBARGO RESOLUTION NOVEMBER 8 TO NICOLO' GORETTI DE FLAMINI, MFA OFFICE DIRECTOR FOR CENTRAL AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS. GORETTI STATED THAT THE GOI WOULD VOTE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EU POSITION. PRINCIPAL GOI CONCERNS IN CUBA ARE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION. "THE CUBAN POPULATION IS STARVING," GORETTI SAID, AS A RESULT OF BALANCE OF PAYMENTS PROBLEMS CAUSED BY A DECREASE IN THE EXPORT PRICES OF SUGAR AND NICKEL  
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AND AN INCREASE IN THE IMPORT PRICE OF OIL. GORETTI WAS CERTAIN THE EU EXPLANATION OF VOTE (EOV) WOULD BE STRONGLY CRITICAL OF THE GOC HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD.

14. (C) GORETTI TOOK EXCEPTION TO THE ARGUMENT THAT THE U.S. EMBARGO DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH FREE TRADE, CITING HELMS-BURTON, BUT AGREED WITH POLOFF'S ARGUMENT THAT THIS LAW WAS LIMITED TO DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF U.S. FORMER PROPERTY HOLDERS. HE ALSO DISAGREED WITH THE POINT THAT THE GOC PRESENTS THE PASSAGE OF THE ANTI-EMBARGO RESOLUTION AS AN INTERNATIONAL ENDORSEMENT OF ITS REPRESSION.

15. (C) IN GORETTI'S "PERSONAL VIEW," "AMERICANS ARE THE FIRST NOT TO RESPECT THE EMBARGO." AS HE HAD REF B, HE REFERRED TO A TRADE EXPOSITION IN WHICH 250-300 AMERICANS HAD TAKEN PART ALONG WITH CASTRO. HE CLAIMED THAT THE AMERICANS HAD BROKEN THE EMBARGO BY PARTICIPATING, THOUGH HE MENTIONED THE SALE OF FOODSTUFFS, WHICH POLOFF CLARIFIED ARE NOT COVERED BY THE EMBARGO. ACTION REQUEST: POST WOULD APPRECIATE FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS EPISODE, IN CASE GORETTI RAISES IT AGAIN. END ACTION REQUEST.

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EU READOUT ON MEETING WITH CUBA: DIALOGUE OF THE DEAF  
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16. (C) GORETTI SHARED AN EU DOCUMENT THAT GAVE A DETAILED READOUT OF THE NOVEMBER 4 EU-CUBA DISCUSSIONS IN COPENHAGEN. THE FOLLOWING QUOTES REFER TO WHAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE DOCUMENT AND ARE NOT NECESSARILY QUOTES OF WHAT WAS SAID IN COPENHAGEN.

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17. (C) THE EU TOLD THE GOC, "CONTINUOUS (CONTINUING) HARASSMENT OF DISSIDENTS IS OF DEEP CONCERN." IT HAD "HOPED FOR A PROPER DISCUSSION IN THE CUBAN ASSEMBLY OF THE VARELA PROJECT." IN REPLY, THE GOC ASSERTED, "NOBODY ACCUSED CUBA OF SYSTEMATIC HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, NOR FOR EXAMPLE OF TORTURE OR DISAPPEARANCES AS IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES.... THE VARELA INITIATIVE WAS PROOF THAT CUBANS CAN SPEAK." EIGHT MILLION CUBANS HAD VOTED TO MAKE THE SOCIALIST CHARACTER OF THE CONSTITUTION INVIOLEABLE.

18. (C) URGING THE GOC TO RELEASE POLITICAL PRISONERS--NAMING LEYVA, BRUZON, PADRON, AND BRIZUELA, SPECIFICALLY--THE EU ASKED THE GOC TO RATIFY THE CIPPR AND CECSCR HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES. IN RIPOSTE, THE GOC SAID THAT "POLITICAL PRISONERS WERE PAID BY THE UNITED STATES, SO IN MANY COUNTRIES, THEY WOULD GET WORSE TREATMENT," BUT IN CUBA THEY WERE TREATED THE SAME AS OTHER PRISONERS. THE GOC SUGGESTED THAT, INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING THE LEAD OF THE UNITED STATES, WHICH "HAD A VENDETTA AGAINST CUBA," THE EU SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF WITH HUMAN RIGHTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, SUCH AS CHINA.

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"BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" AND THE FIGHT AGAINST (U.S.) TERRORISM  
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ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00
	CTME-00	INL-00	DODE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00
	EUR-00	EXIM-01	E-00	FBIE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01
	SSA-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	ITC-01	LAB-01	L-00
	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OES-00	OIC-02
	OMB-01	DHS-00	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00
	P-00	SCT-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W		

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R 141310Z NOV 02  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6911  
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
USINT HAVANA  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USEU BRUSSELS 2955  
USMISSION GENEVA

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19. (C) GORETTI INDICATED THAT THE REST OF THE DIALOGUE HAD CONTINUED "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH" OR IN A SIMILAR VEIN, WITH THE EU PRESSING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MARKET FREEDOMS, AND THE GOC REPLYING DEFENSIVELY OR AGGRESSIVELY. THE EU NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, SO IT WOULD LIKE TO SEND THE UN HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. THE GOC REFUSED. THE EU CITED PROBLEMS FOR EUROPEAN INVESTORS AND SAID CUBA NEEDED TO INSTITUTE MARKET REFORMS. THE GOC THANKED THE EU FOR ITS POSITION ON THE EMBARGO, WHICH IT CLAIMED WAS "ENDING STEP BY STEP BECAUSE OF PRESSURE FROM U.S. BUSINESS ON CONGRESS."

10. (U) GORETTI SHARED A THICK BOOK THAT THE GOC HAD DISTRIBUTED AT THE MEETING. ENTITLED "THE FIGHT ON TERRORISM: CUBA--CONTINUING TERRORIST U.S. ACTION," THE BOOK CATEGORIZED U.S. ACTS SUCH AS REMARKING ON CUBA'S BIOLOGICAL WARFARE PROGRAM AS TERRORISM. IT FURTHER PROVIDED A LIST OF "TERROR ATTACKS" AND MIAMI-BASED "TERROR CELLS," MANY OF WHICH IT CLAIMED ARE SUPPORTED BY THE USG.

11. (U) LOOKING FORWARD, GORETTI PREDICTED A SIMILAR UNHRC RESOLUTION TO LAST YEAR'S, URGING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL REFORMS. THE NEXT EU-CUBA MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR DECEMBER 2003 IN HAVANA.  
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